

## PENSIONS

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The National Archives has pension applications and records of pension payments for veterans, their widows, and other heirs. The pension records are based on service in the Armed Forces of the United States between 1775 and 1916. **Note: Civil War Federal pensions are based on Union and not Confederate service.** Application files often contain supporting documents such as discharge papers, affidavits, and depositions of witnesses, narratives of events during service, marriage certificates, birth records, death certificates, pages from family Bibles, and other supporting papers. Pension files usually provide the most genealogical information for researchers.

The pension files in the National Archives are divided into the following major series: Revolutionary War, Old Wars, War of 1812, Indian Wars, Mexican War, and Civil War and later. The series of “Old War” pensions relate primarily to claims based on death or disability incurred in service in the Regular Army, Navy, or Marine Corps between the end of the Revolutionary War in 1783 and the outbreak of the Civil War in 1861. The series of “Indian War” pension applications relate to service performed in the Indian campaigns between 1817 and 1898. Consolidated with this series are some Indian War pension application files that were formerly in the Old War series. The records in each series are arranged alphabetically by name of veteran, except those in the Civil War and later series, which are arranged numerically by application, certificate, or file number. All series of pension application files have alphabetical name indexes.

For the Civil War and later pensions consult T288, *General Index to Pension Files, 1861–1934*. This microfilm publication is arranged alphabetically by the

AUGUSTA, ME.

B-402.

Certificate No. 76706

Name Joshua L. Chamberlain

Department of the Interior,  
BUREAU OF PENSIONS.

Washington, D. C., January 15, 1898.

SIR:

In forwarding to the pension agent the executed voucher for your next quarterly payment please favor me by returning this circular to him with replies to the questions enumerated below.

Very respectfully,

W. H. Wood

Commissioner of Pensions.

First. Are you married? If so, please state your wife's full name and her maiden name.

Answer. Frances Caroline Adams

Second. When, where, and by whom were you married?

Answer. December 7<sup>th</sup> 1855. { Mansfield, Maine. Rev. Dr. George C. Adams (pastor) officiating.

Third. What record of marriage exists?

Answer. Records Town Clerk's office Mansfield, Maine

Fourth. Were you previously married? If so, please state the name of your former wife and the date and place of her death or divorce.

Answer. Not previously married.

Fifth. Have you any children living? If so, please state their names and the dates of their birth.

Answer. Grace Dupre (now Mrs. George S. Allen) born October 1856

Harold Mylles, born October 1858  
Joshua L. Chamberlain

Date of reply, March 6<sup>th</sup>, 1898

cc

(Signature)

200100000 00

This document is from the pension file of Joshua Chamberlain who served in the 20th Maine Infantry during the Civil War. It is a questionnaire from the Bureau of Pensions seeking information relating to his wife and children. (RG 15)

individual's last name. The index cards include the individual's unit(s) making it easier to decipher individuals with the same name. Once the application number or pension certificate number is found (this includes invalid and widow pensions), researchers can request to view the pension file. Researchers unable to come to Washington, DC, may request copies of these records by using a NATF Form 85, National Archives Order for Copies of Federal Pension or Bounty Land Warrant Applications. You can also order copies of these records online at [www.archives.gov/research\\_room/orderonline.html](http://www.archives.gov/research_room/orderonline.html).

If the pension file was still active in 1934, the file will still be in the legal custody of the Department of Veterans Affairs. Send a Freedom of Information Act request to Department of Veteran Affairs, Director, Records Management Service (005E3), 810 Vermont Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20420.

Pension files (including application files) often contain valuable personal information on soldiers, sailors, and marines not found in other records. A typical pension file contains the application of the claimant, documents submitted as evidence of identity and service, and records of action taken on the claim. The claimant may have been a veteran or his widow, minor children, or other dependant. Since a claimant could have applied for a pension under several different acts, a pension file may contain more than one application from a claimant. It may also contain applications from several claimants because applications for pensions based on the service of one serviceman for a certain period were usually filed together. Documents submitted in support of some pension claims include affidavits attesting to service, pages from family Bibles, and copies of birth, marriage, and death records. For service in the Civil War and later, a pension file may also include Bureau of Pensions questionnaires sent out in 1898 and 1915, which contain genealogical information. Information on pension payments, often including last payment, can be found on M850, *Veterans Administration Pension Payment Cards, 1907–1933*.

You can also search T289, *Organization Index to Pension Files of Veterans Who Served Between 1861 and 1900*. Note that T289 does not include naval service. Three microfilm publications that include records relating to Navy pensions are: M1274,

*Case Files of Disapproved Pension Applications of Widows and Other Dependents of Civil War and Later Navy Veterans* ("Navy Widows' Originals"), 1861–1910; M1279, *Case Files of Approved Pension Applications of Widows and Other Dependents of Civil War and Later Navy Veterans*, ('Navy Widows' Certificates'), 1861–1910; and M1391, *Lists of Navy Veterans for Whom There are Navy Widows' and Other Dependents' Disapproved Pension Files* ('Navy Widows' Originals'), 1861–1910.

For a listing of microfilm publications to other pension indexes and pension files, consult the National Archives' *Microfilm Resources for Research: A Comprehensive Catalog* (2000). For more information on pension records consult chapter seven of the *Guide to Genealogical Research in the National Archives*.

### *Selected Published Indexes*

*Index of Revolutionary War Pension Applications in the National Archives.*

Washington, DC: National Genealogical Society, 1976.

White, Virgil D., compiler. *Index to US Military Pension Applications of Remarried Widows for Service between 1812 and 1911*. Waynesboro, TN: The National Historical Publishing Company, 1999.

White, Virgil D., compiler. *Index to Pension Applications for Indian Wars Service between 1818 and 1898*. Waynesboro, TN: The National Historical Publishing Company, 1997.

White, Virgil D., transcriber. *Index to War of 1812 Pension Files*. 2 Vols. Waynesboro, TN: The National Historical Publishing Company, 1992.

### *Additional Source of Information*

*Guide to Genealogical Research in the National Archives*, third ed., pages 169–177.

### *Internet Sources*

#### *HeritageQuest*

HeritageQuest Online ([www.heritagequestonline.com](http://www.heritagequestonline.com)) contains selected Revolutionary War pension and bounty-land warrant applications. The database can be searched using surname, given name, state, and type of service. The database provides images taken from records found on

M805, *Selected Records From Revolutionary War Pension and Bounty-Land Warrant Application Files*. The result pages also provide the series (microfilm publication number) and roll number that the image is found on.

#### *Ancestry.com*

Ancestry maintains a Civil War and later military pension database. The database is an index to nearly 2.5 million pension application cards. Each record includes the veteran's name and state in which he, or his dependents, filed the application. If a widow or a child filed the application, their name is provided. Because these pension files were for Federal benefits, this collection only contains the names of Union veterans. To researchers of Civil War ancestors this database can be a useful source of detailed information. The index contains a link to a digitized image of the index card itself, which will contain additional information on the individual, such as unit of service, date of filing, and application and certificate numbers for the pension case file housed at the National Archives building in Washington, DC.

Ancestry also maintains a Revolutionary War Pension Index database. The database is an index to a list of pensions awarded to U.S. veterans of the war. It was taken from "Letter from the Secretary of War, communicating A Transcript of the Pension List of the United States showing the Number of Pensioners in the Several Districts. Also, The Amount Allowed to each Pensioner" dated June 1, 1813. It provides the name of pensioner, state or district of residence, number in the roll, rank, and annual stipend. The districts included are: New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Vermont, Rhode Island, Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Kentucky, Tennessee, Ohio, Indiana territory, Michigan, and the District of Columbia. It reveals information regarding over 1,700 men. While *Ancestry.com* is a fee-based site, all National Archives facilities have public access computers that can link researchers to an institutional version of their web site.

*Footnote.com*

Footnote currently maintains a Civil War and later pension database arranged by unit. The site provides an index to pension applications for service in the U.S. Army between 1861 and 1917, grouped according to the units in which the veterans served. Index cards may include: the individual's rank, company, and regiment, dates of service, and application number. The application number can be used to view or request copies of the pension application file housed at the National Archives Building in Washington, DC. While *Footnote.com* is a partially fee-based site, all National Archives research facilities have public access computers that can link researchers to their web site.